

***Big Fish: a novel of epic proportions* by Daniel Wallace**

In the novel *Big Fish* by Daniel Wallace, Edward Bloom, the protagonist is said to have had three labors: a veterinarian assist, sales clerk, and saving a young girl from a wild dog. Edward Bloom's character can be compared to Hercules, the son of Zeus, who was famous for his strength and for his numerous far-ranging adventures. Edward and Hercules are similar because, like Edward, Hercules as well had many labors.

Big Fish is in some ways a postmodern *parody of the heroic monomyth*. The essential pattern of the heroic monomyth is that of unusual birth (when he was born it rained in Alabama); leaving home (leaves home when he is seventeen in search of something new); followed by various tests of prowess such as fights with monsters or against impossible odds (Karl the Giant)—in the progress of which apparently insignificant or magical helpers lend a hand (the girl in the lake outside of the place with no name, who also helps Edward when the Neried sinks). He gains a lover or wife (Sandra Kay Templeton); often undergoes a perilous journey to another realm (Specter). All of these characteristics are present in the heroic monomyth.

Edward Bloom- the protagonist throughout the novel *Big Fish*. The story mainly revolves around the tall tales from Edward's life. He displays the situational archetype Death and Rebirth by the end of the novel and is also known as The Hero character archetype.

William Bloom- the son of the protagonist. He appears when his father is in his stage of death mostly because he didn't get to spend much time with his father as he grew up. This separation between father and son helps demonstrate the character archetype of Father-Son Conflict.

Sandra Kay Templeton- the wife of Edward Bloom and the mother of William Bloom. Sandra and Edward fall in love in a town called Auburn. Edward will do anything for her love, including fighting her ex-boyfriend- Don Price.

Dr. Bennett- the old family doctor. Dr. Bennett delivers the news of Edward Bloom's condition to Sandra and William four times throughout the novel and every time he cannot compose himself with his emotion because he does everything he can to help Edward survive and discovers that he cannot do anything to help.

Karl- the giant who was abandoned by his mother and came to Ashland in search of food. He ate everything and the very life of the town was threatened. Edward went to the mountains to Karl's cave and tamed him as well as convinced him to become a farmer. Karl displays the archetype of the "Friendly Beast" or "The Evil Figure with the Ultimately Good Heart".

Willie- the first man Edward meets when he arrives in the place that had no name. Willie tells Edwards everything about the town and that in order to leave, he must get past Dog.

Dog- the neighborhood dog that guards the exit of the place that had no name. Dog determines who can leave and who can't by allowing the person to approach. Edward approaches Dog and overcomes it allowing Edward to escape the place that had no name and continue his journey to the new world.

Jasper "Buddy" Barron- the man who spoke about Edward's first day in the world he would come to live in. He worked with Edward and was vice president of Bloom Inc., and took over the helm when Edward retired.

The Old Lady- takes Edward in to live with her for three days and three nights when he first arrives in Auburn. She is missing one eye and replaces it with a glass one that a group of youths steal and think has magic powers.

Don Price- a college student in Auburn and the boy who is in a relationship with Sandra Kay Templeton before Edward arrives. Don and Edward have two encounters- when Edward retrieved the Old Lady's glass eye and when he was fighting to win Sandra Kay Templeton's heart from Don.

Muriel Rainwater- a frequent customer in the lingerie section of Smith's department store where Edward worked. A very rude customer who ever wanted assistance from Edward.

Wiley- a citizen of the small town Specter who was the sheriff for a while and then the pastor. He informs Edward of the part of Specter, occupied by Jenny Hilly that he does not own.

Jenny Hill- the woman who lives and owns the last part of Specter. Edward meets with her to discuss owning her land so he can have all of Specter and the two end up falling in love even though Edward is married to Sandra Kay Templeton.

